
Science Budgets, Timelines, and Strategy for Talking in DC

RHIC Users Meeting
10.14.05

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The Budget Process

The Players

The “Agencies”

Bureau

Bureau

Bureau

The White House

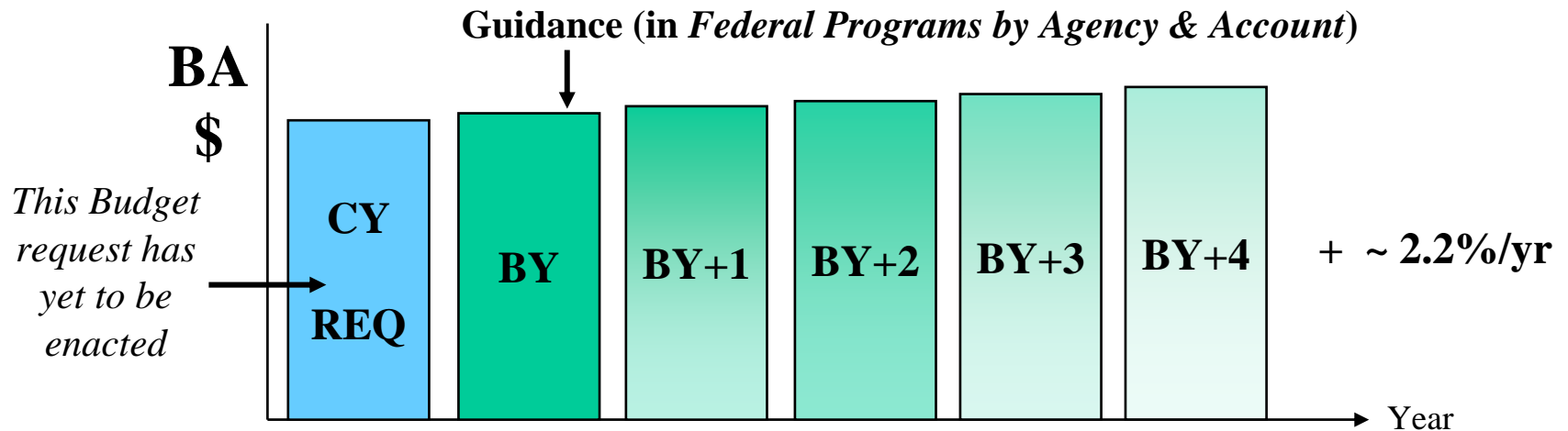
Congress

House

Senate

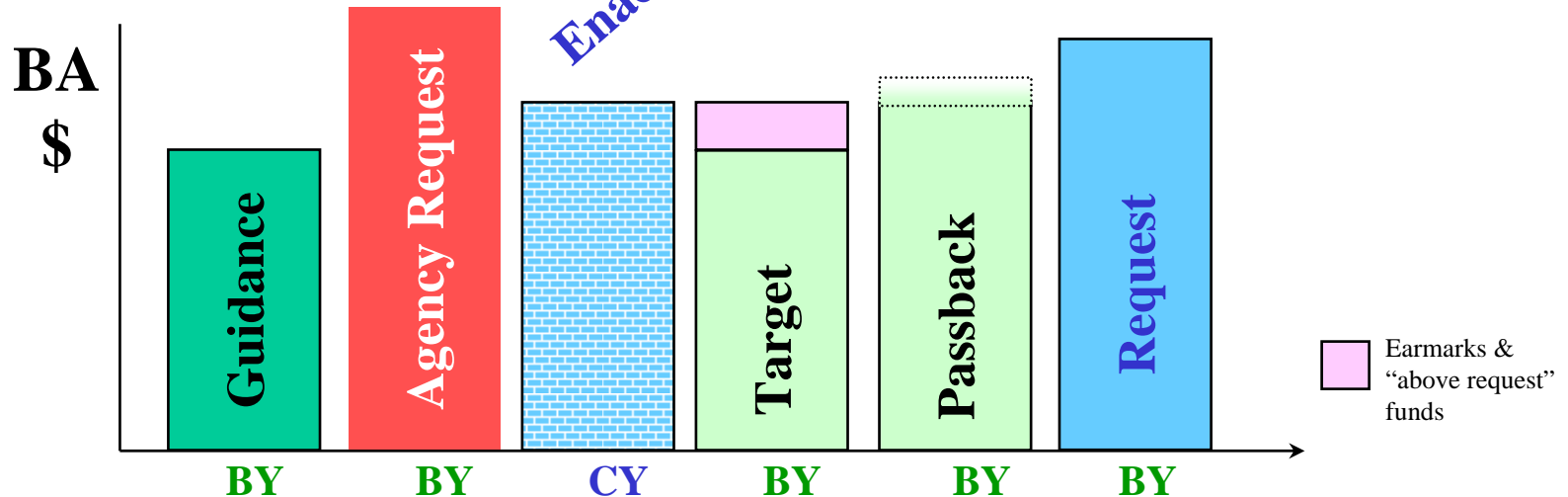
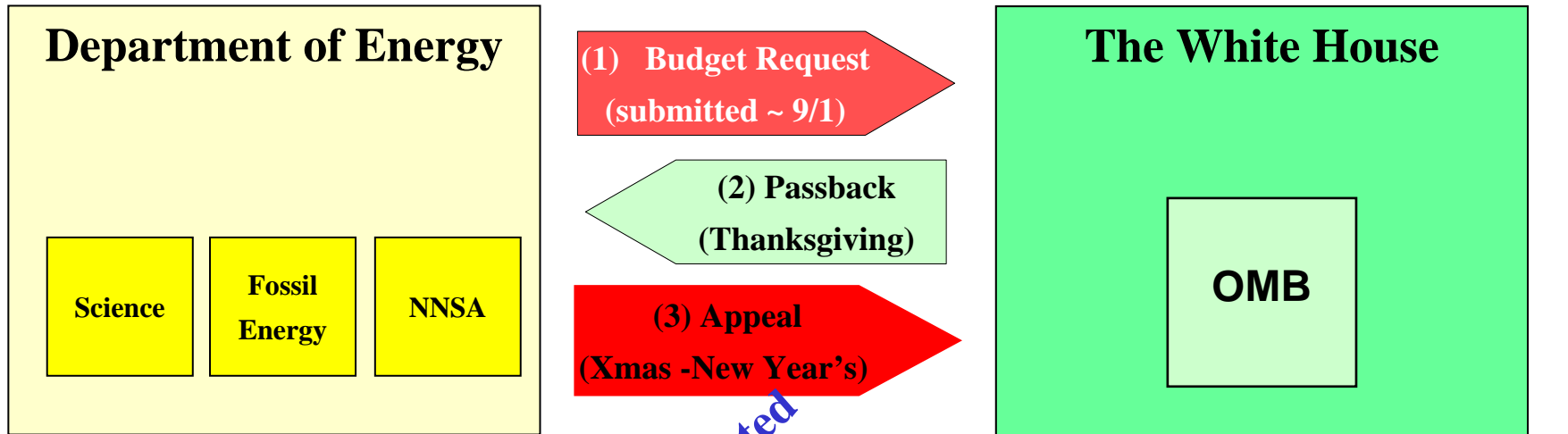
The Budget Process

Agency Formulation: February - August



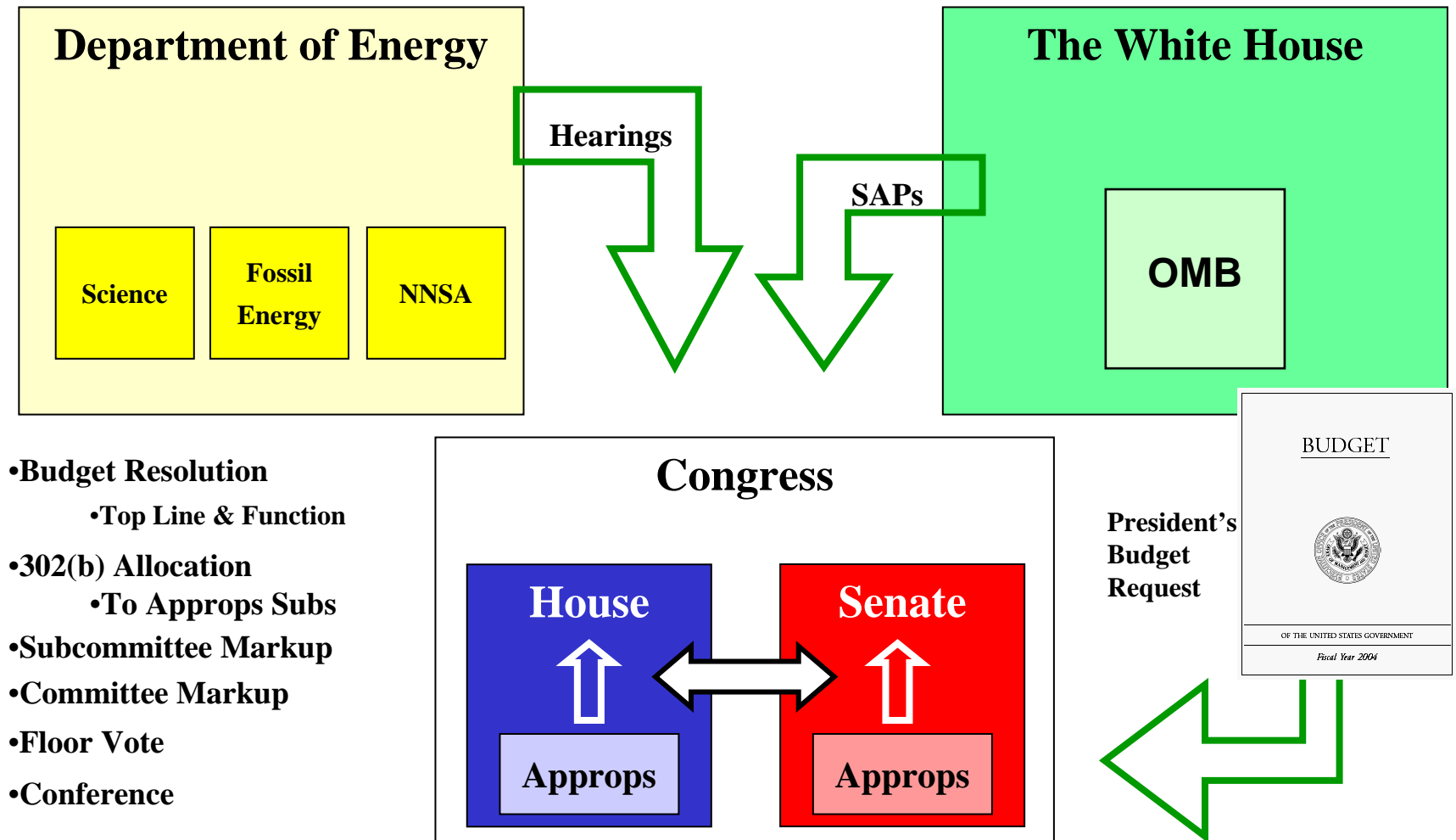
The Budget Process

“Budget Season”: September – January



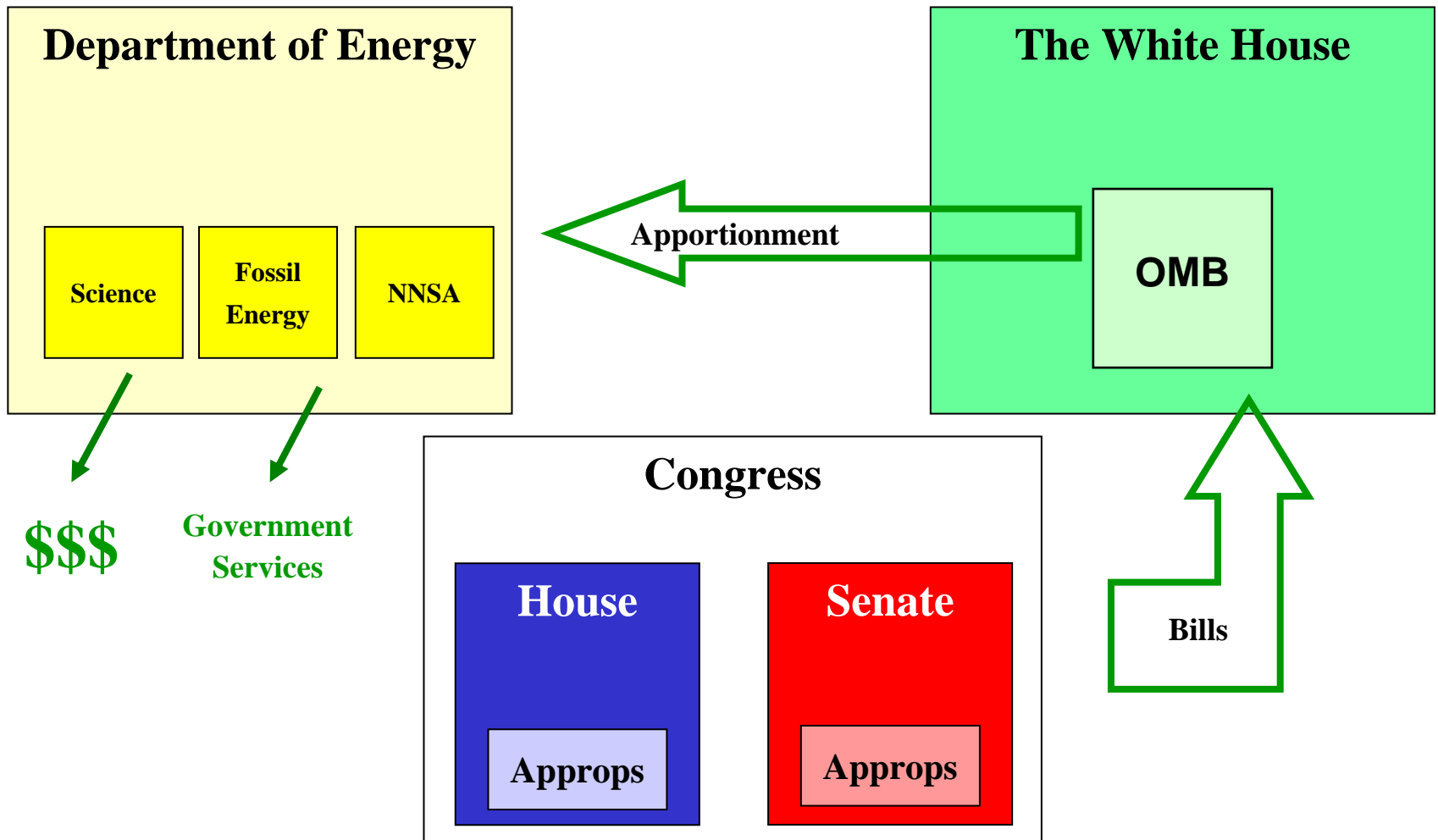
The Budget Process

Appropriations: February – September (?)



The Budget Process

Execution: September (?) - September



Question 1. What roles do OSTP and OMB play in the budget process and what are the relevant time scales each year for

- a. Developing the DOE budget request.
- b. Developing the presidential budget.
- c. Working the budget through the Congressional process.

Answer: The role of OSTP is to inform the Executive Office of the President of the scientific and technical dimension to an issue. The advice is given to all White House Offices, including OMB. OSTP activities go well beyond budget formulation.

The role of the OMB is to:

- formulate the President's budget request
- develop budget projections
- analyze and implement economic policies
- implement agency management policies
- oversee agency program management, adherence to rules, etc.

OMB owns the budget process. OSTP has always been asked to participate.

OSTP will participate in the budget formulation process and will look at the R&D budget widely to see if it meets the objective of the President's policies, has any gaps or imbalances, and that it 'makes sense' within budgetary constraints. OSTP can ask for specific funding to address concerns.

2. How can the UEC become more involved in the efforts to make the case for funding basic research in the physical sciences and RHIC/AGS operations in particular? (both year-to-year and long term, for example RHIC-II and e-RHIC).
 - a.) Start by doing outstanding science and talking about it outside your community.
 - b.) Continually refine your vision for the future and talk about where the science is headed, and how you will lead the way.
 - c.) Understand your audience, know govt process in detail. Know what to say and to who. Remember: the message will change with every audience.
 - d.) Talk about the rich spectrum of discovery in basic physical sciences and the deep connections that are emerging and the role you play. Context and breadth of impact are important. Don't stretch the truth, though.
 - e.) Engage science writers to develop quality pieces for popular literature (NYT, Time, Discovery, Scientific American, etc.) Communications to the taxpayer is important. Politicians read the papers!

3. How can the users become more involved in this process? We encourage them to contact their representatives in local and state offices and this year John Hill is organizing a users visit day (separate from when the UEC Chairs go to DC). What else can users do?
 - a.) Visit with DOE Germantown, and Forrestal, SC-1 in late Spring.
 - b.) Visit OSTP in September, October.
 - c.) Encourage international users to communicate with their funding agencies, sponsors, host institutions, etc. regarding RHIC and its program. See if the international RHIC users/contributors/sponsors will communicate to the US (OSTP, DOS, DOE, the Hill) to remind these people about their contribution and interest in RHIC.
 - d.) Band together with other user groups to develop a broader strategy.

4. What about issues other than budgets? How can the UEC and the users assist in getting DOE Orders to be more appropriate for user facilities (e.g., PIV badges, finger printing).

Try to work with other affected user groups at BNL and across DOE labs (fermi users group, JLab, light source users groups, etc) to develop position statements that reflect an good understanding of the issues and offer some helpful suggestions (do not whine or just complain). You need to understand the genesis and motivations for the order.

Send this to the people who generate the orders, all the ADs, the Secretary of Energy, Dep. Secretary, SEAB members, as well (as appropriate).

PLEASE: Be very careful about the message. Vet the message with folks who know the issues and how to frame your arguments and state your issues.

NOTE: OMB is the ULTIMATE owner of the implementation of HSPD-12. Writing to OSTP and OMB would be useful as a collective.

5. Anything else you think it is important for the UEC and users to understand.

Some rules of thumb:

Your proxy in the budget wars are the AD in DOE (Dennis Kovar) , SC-1, and OSTP.
Dennis needs your support.

You should develop a relationship with OSTP. Do not visit just to lobby or complain. Informing OSTP about your science, good happenings is helpful. They know why you're there and they want to help. Give them the information they need.

OSTP and OMB are concerned with process. Congressional authorizers (e.g. House Science Committee) are interested in process, as well.

Appropriators worry much more about constituent concerns.

The President proposes a budget. It is a suggestion (blueprint), not a law.

The Congress writes the checks. No cuts or budget changes occur until the appropriations are finished.

Authorization bills mean little in terms of budget. Do not get too excited by them.

People in OMB and OSTP are not 'out to get you.' OMB works in a very difficult environment under very difficult constraints. Everyone wants something, never enough money, hard to find ground truth.

OMB examiners in science areas typically have a BS, MS or PhD in a scientific discipline.

(Example: The Office of Science examiner has a PhD in Astronomy from U. Michigan.)

They actually like science.....